Claims:

1. An inspection system for inspecting an article on-the-fly, the system comprising

an image capture device arranged to capture a plurality of images of the article, each image corresponding to a portion of said article within a field of view projected upon said article;

a table arranged to receive and move said article along X and Y axes relative to the image capture device;

a freeze unit intermediate the image capture device and the table;

wherein said freeze unit is arranged to selectively shift the field of view at a speed corresponding to the movement of the table so as to maintain a fixed relative position of the field of view and the article during an image capture event.

2. The inspection system according to claim 1, wherein the field of view of each image having adjacent overlapping regions.

3. The inspection system according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the inspection system is arranged to store the plurality of images and relative positions of said images.

4. The inspection system according to any one of claims 1 to 3, further including a stitching system for combining said plurality of images as a single image of the article.

5. The inspection system according to any one of claims 1 to 4, further including a lighting system for projecting light of different conditions on said article, said plurality of images including images under different lighting conditions.

6. The inspection system according to claim 5, wherein said lighting conditions include any one or a combination of: visible light, infrared, ultraviolet, coaxial light, low angle light.

7. The inspection system according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein said freeze unit includes at least one mirror coupled to an actuator, said actuator arranged to shift the field of view by moving said coupled mirror.

8. The inspection system according to claim 7, wherein said actuator rotates said mirror.

9. The inspection system according to claim 7 or 8, wherein said actuator translates said mirror.

10. The inspection system according to any one of claims 7 to 9, wherein said freeze unit includes at least one fixed mirror intermediate the table and the at least one actuated mirror.

11. A method for inspecting an article by capturing a plurality of images on-the-fly, the method comprising the steps of:

capturing at least one images of the article, the image corresponding to a portion of said article within a field of view projected upon said article;

moving said article relative to the image capture device along X and Y axes;

shifting the field of view at a speed corresponding to the movement of the table, and so;

maintaining a fixed relative position of the field of view and the article during the capturing step.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the field of view of each image having adjacent overlapping regions.

13. The method according to claim 10, further including the step of storing the plurality of images and relative positions of said images.

14. The method according to claim 10 or 11, further including the step of stitching said plurality of images and so creating a single image of the article.

15. The method according to claim 12, further including the step of inspecting the stitched and/or unstitched image of the article for defects.

16. The method according to any one of claims 10 to 13, further including the step of projecting light of different conditions on said article, said plurality of images including images under different lighting conditions.

17. The method according to any one of claims 10 to 14, wherein the shifting step includes rotating a mirror directing the field of view to an image capture device.

18. The method according to any one of claims 10 to 13, wherein the maintaining step includes capturing each image multiple times, each under different lighting conditions.

19. The method system according to claim 17, further including the step of fixing a second mirror intermediate the table and the rotated mirror.